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LETTER DATED 28 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward, on behalf of Chief Tom Ikimi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Committee of Five on Sierra Leone, the texts of the communiqué and the ECOWAS six-month peace plan for Sierra Leone, which were issued at the conclusion of the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ECOWAS Committee of Five with the delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah, held at Conakry on 22 and 23 October 1997 (see annexes I and II, respectively).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ibrahim A. GAMBARI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

Communiqué issued at Conakry on 23 October 1997 at the conclusion of the meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Five on Sierra Leone of the Economic Community of West African States and the delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah

1. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ministerial Committee of Five on Sierra Leone held a meeting at Conakry on 22 and 23 October 1997.

2. In continuation of the negotiations initiated at Abidjan on 17 and 18 and 29 and 30 July 1997, the Committee held discussions with an enlarged delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah.

3. The meeting reviewed the situation in Sierra Leone since the breakdown of negotiations between the Committee of Five and the representatives of the junta on 30 July 1997. It recalled the ECOWAS decisions concerning the monitoring of the ceasefire, the imposition of sanctions and the embargo, as well as the restoration of peace to Sierra Leone by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG). It also recalled Security Council resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997 placing an embargo on Sierra Leone.

4. The Committee of Five and the junta's delegation agreed to accelerate efforts towards the peaceful resolution of the Sierra Leonian crisis.

5. To that end, the Committee of Five and the representatives of Major Johnny Paul Koromah adopted an ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone and a timetable for its implementation over a six-month period with effect from 23 October 1997.

6. It is recognized that Corporal Fodey Sankoh, as a leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), could continue to play an active role and participate in the peace process. In the spirit of the Abidjan Accord and in the context of this agreement, Corporal Sankoh is expected to return to his country to make his contribution to the peace process.

7. The ECOWAS peace plan for Sierra Leone provides for:

(a) The reinstatement of the legitimate Government of President Tejan Kabbah within a period of six months;

(b) The immediate cessation of hostilities;

(c) Cooperation of the junta with ECOMOG in order to enforce the sanctions peacefully;

(d) Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants;

(e) Provision of humanitarian assistance;

(f) Return of refugees and displaced persons;

(g) Immunities and guarantees to the leaders of the coup d'état of 25 May 1997;

(h) Modalities for broadening the power base in Sierra Leone.

8. The Committee of Five and the representatives of Major Johnny Paul Koromah agreed to continue negotiations towards effective and prompt implementation of the peace plan.

9. The meeting renewed its appeal to the international community to provide appropriate humanitarian assistance to the refugees and displaced persons and to facilitate their return.

10. The meeting reiterated its appeal to the international community to provide adequate assistance to the neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, which have recorded an increased influx of refugees on their territory.

11. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity for their cooperation with ECOWAS and appealed to them for material, logistic and financial support to ECOMOG to enable it to carry out the mandate given by the Authority of Heads of State and Government and the Security Council.

12. The Committee expressed its deep gratitude to General Lansana Conte, President of the Republic of Guinea, Head of State, and to the Government and people of Guinea for the excellent facilities put at their disposal and for the hospitality accorded to all the delegations.

Annex II

Economic Community of West African States six-month peace plan for Sierra Leone (23 October 1997-22 April 1998)

Schedule of implementation

PREAMBLE

Pursuant to the mandate of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement proposals for the resolution of the Sierra Leone crisis contained in the final communiqué issued at Conakry on 26 June 1997, a six-point peace plan has been devised for the early return of constitutional governance to Sierra Leone. These are:

1. Cessation of hostilities throughout Sierra Leone

   (a) With immediate effect;

   (b) Establish monitoring and verification mechanism.

   Note. Process to be undertaken by the ECOWAS Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), and United Nations military observers. The participation of United Nations military observers requires the agreement of the United Nations Security Council.

2. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants: 1-31 December 1997

   Note. ECOWAS Committee of Five ministerial assessment visit (20 November 1997).

3. Commencement of humanitarian assistance: 14 November 1997

   Note. ECOMOG to monitor the process.

4. Return of refugees and displaced persons

   Commencement date: 1 December 1997

   Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-assisted repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons.

5. Restoration of the constitutional Government and broadening of the power base:

   Takes effect from 22 April 1998

6. Immunities and guarantees:

   Takes effect from 22 April 1998

ELABORATION OF THE ECOWAS PEACE PLAN

1. Cessation of hostilities

It is considered that cessation of hostilities should come into force immediately. However, this will have to be accompanied by a monitoring and verification regime. Leaders of the various combatant units will be expected to disseminate information concerning these measures and ensure compliance with them. These measures will be supervised by ECOMOG, assisted by a United Nations military observer group. The verification process will continue right up to the termination of the peace plan, that is, until 22 April 1998.

2. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants

It is considered that a minimum of 30 days would be required to conduct effective disarmament and demobilization of combatants. This should take place from 1 to 31 December 1997. Given the nationwide dislocation of infrastructures and administration, a simple and uncomplicated procedure is envisaged. Combatants will be directed to report to designated centres in order to be engaged in the disarmament process. ECOMOG will supervise the entire process of disarmament and demobilization. Where necessary, incentives may have to be provided to encourage the voluntary participation of combatants in all this process.

3. Humanitarian assistance

Considering that sanctions/embargoes will be strictly enforced throughout the period of the implementation of the Sierra Leone peace plan, the flows of humanitarian assistance beginning on 14 November 1997 will continue to be monitored by ECOMOG and United Nations military observers. To this effect a mechanism will be established by ECOMOG to facilitate the flows of humanitarian assistance. All this will be worked out within the context of a Security Council resolution.

4. Return of refugees and displaced persons

Recognizing that refugees, particularly those in neighbouring countries, may wish to return voluntarily following the cessation of hostilities, UNHCR assistance should begin from 1 December 1997.

5. Restoration of constitutional Government and broadening of the power base

The restoration of constitutional order to Sierra Leone is at the heart of the ECOWAS peace plan. Consequently, it is considered necessary that the Government of Tejan Kabbah should be enabled to exercise effective control once he is restored to office on 22 April 1998. Nevertheless, it is recognized that for an enduring peace to be restored which will enjoy the support of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and the confidence of the subregion, efforts should be made to ensure that an all-inclusive Government is evolved. In this regard, the goodwill and assistance of the international community, both financial and material, would be necessary.

The interest of the various parties in Sierra Leone should be suitably accommodated. Accordingly, it is recommended that the new Cabinet should be a cabinet of inclusion.

Furthermore, in order to accommodate the aspirations of their supporters, board and senior civil service appointments are to reflect broad national character.

All the above power-sharing formulae should come into effect on 22 April 1998.

It is recognized that Corporal Fodey Sankoh as a leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) could continue to play an active role and participate in the peace process. In the spirit of the Abidjan Accord and in the context of this agreement, Corporal Sankoh is expected to return to his country to make his contribution to the peace process.

6. Reintegration of combatants

All those who disarm as a result of the implementation of the peace process should be provided with either job training to fit them for alternative employment or given scholarships and grants for further education. Access to education at all levels should be made available to all demobilized persons. Ex-combatants should be provided with assistance to facilitate their reintegration into their communities. We strongly appeal to the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ECOWAS and indeed the international community to render appropriate assistance to achieve this objective.

7. Donor appeals for emergency humanitarian assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation

The United Nations and OAU, in cooperation with ECOWAS, are requested to launch these appeals as soon as hostilities cease.

8. Immunities and guarantees

It is considered essential that unconditional immunities and guarantees from prosecution be extended to all involved in the events of 25 May 1997 with effect from 22 April 1998.

DONE AT CONAKRY, THIS 23RD DAY OF OCTOBER 1997

For the ECOWAS Committee of Five
on Sierra Leone:

(Signed) Tom IKIMI
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Federal Republic of Nigeria

(Signed) Lamine KAMARA
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Guinea

For the delegation representing Major Johnny Paul Koromah
Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) regime in
Sierra Leone:

(Signed) Abdul Karim SESAY
Secretary-General, AFRC

(Signed) Alimamy Pallo BANGURA
Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs

Witnesses

For the United Nations:

(Signed) Ibrahima FALL
Assistant Secretary-General

For the Organization of African Unity:

(Signed) Adwoa COLEMAN
OAU Representative